

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 242533

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DRAFTED BY EUR/EE:RPTTUS:FEW
APPROVED BY EUR - MR. ARMITAGE
EUR/EE - MR.ANDREWS

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R 042238Z NOV 74
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY SOFIA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, BEXP, BU

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR POPOV'S OCTOBER 30 VISIT TO DEPARTMENT

REF.: STATE 239363

1. IN ADDITION TO REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL COMMERCIAL OFFICES REPORTED IN REFTTEL, AMBASSADOR POPOV ASKED ABOUT RESULTS OF SECRETARY'S VISIT TO MOSCOW, GAVE ADVICE ON REQUESTS BY AMERICAN AIRLINES AND OTHER COMPANIES FOR PERMISSION TO OVERFLY BULGARIA, INQUIRED ABOUT PROCEDURE OF EXTENDING MFN TO ADDITIONAL EE COUNTRIES AFTER PRESIDENT RECEIVES AUTHORITY TO DO SO, AND EXPATIATED ON BULGARIA'S LONG RECORD OF GOOD RELATIONS WITH ITS JEWISH MINORITY.

2. MOSCOW VISIT. AMBASSADOR POPOV WAS INTERESTED IN GENERAL ATMOSPHERE OF SECRETARY'S VISIT TO MOSCOW BUT ASKED SPECIFICALLY ONLY ABOUT PROSPECTS ARISING OUT OF THIS VISIT FOR SUBSTANTIVE PROGRESS ON SALT. ARMITAGE REPLIED THAT, WHILE IT IS HARD TO SAY NOW WHAT PROSPECTS ARE, SOME OF CONCEPTUAL HURDLES ARE BEGINNING TO BE PUSHED ASIDE IN PREPARATION FOR TIME WHEN THE PRESIDENT MEETS BREZHNEV. ON CSCE, WE COULD HAVE FURTHER PROGRESS IF OTHER SIDE SHOWED

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PAGE 02 STATE 242533

SOME FLEXIBILITY ON BASKET III QUESTIONS. AT SAME TIME,

THERE IS SOME OPTIMISM ABOUT OUTCOME OF BASKET I TALKS.

3. OVERFLIGHT REQUESTS. NOTING THAT HE HAD RECENTLY RECEIVED FOUR REQUESTS FOR OVERFLIGHTS, ONE OF WHICH CAME IN BY TELEX AFTERNOON OF OCTOBER 30 FOR FLIGHT ACROSS BULGARIA NEXT DAY, POPOV SAID HE NOW HAS INSTRUCTIONS TO TELL U.S. AIRLINES AND INDUSTRIAL FIRMS REQUESTING EXECUTIVE AIRCRAFT OVERFLIGHTS TO MAKE APPLICATIONS THROUGH U.S. EMBASSY SOFIA, ALLOWING SEVEN DAYS FOR PROCESSING. ARMITAGE SAID WE WILL DO WHAT WE CAN TO IMPROVE SITUATION.

4. MFN. POPOV ASKED HOW BULGARIANS WOULD PROCEED IF THE TRADE BILL BECOMES LAW IN NOVEMBER. ARMITAGE SAID IT IS LIKELY BILL WILL NOT BE PASSED UNTIL END OF YEAR. AT THAT TIME FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS WILL BE PRIOR COMMITMENTS TO SOVIET UNION AND ROMANIA. POPOV WAS INTERESTED IN PROCEDURE FOR EXTENDING MFN TO SOVIET UNION AND IN FORM OF COMMITMENT TO ROMANIA. AFTER COMMENTING SHORTLY ON THESE QUESTIONS, ARMITAGE NOTED LIKELIHOOD THAT EMIGRATION ISSUE WILL ALSO FIGURE IN APPROACH CONGRESS TAKES TOWARD EXTENSION OF MFN TO ADDITIONAL EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES.

5. JEWISH MINORITY IN BULGARIA. AMBASSADOR POPOV DEVOTED FIVE MINUTES TO RECITATION OF BULGARIA'S HISTORICALLY AMICABLE RELATIONS WITH ITS JEWISH CITIZENS, NOTING PARENTHETICALLY THAT THIS RECORD WAS NOT PERHAPS TRUE OF OTHER COUNTRIES IN REGION. AFTER NOTING THAT BULGARIANS SHOULD NOT ASSUME (AS AMBASSADOR CLEARLY DID) THAT BULGARIA'S RECORD ON THIS QUESTION WAS WELL KNOWN TO PUBLIC OFFICIALS AND LEGISLATORS, ARMITAGE EMPHASIZED THAT EMIGRATION ISSUE WAS NOT ONLY A MATTER INVOLVING JEWS BUT OTHER CITIZENS OF THE EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AS WELL.

6. COMMERCIAL OFFICES. ON REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO OPEN ADDITIONAL COMMERCIAL OFFICES, POPOV SAID CHICAGO AND SAN FRANCISCO ARE EQUALLY IMPORTANT. HE OBSERVED THAT POLAND AND ROMANIA EACH HAS COMMERCIAL OFFICES IN THESE CITIES IN ADDITION TO NEW YORK AND EMPHASIZED ADVANTAGE OF THEIR ESTABLISHMENT TO AMERICAN FIRMS WISHING TO DO BUSINESS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 STATE 242533

WITH BULGARIA AS WELL AS TO BULGARIAN GOVERNMENT'S OWN MARKETING EFFORTS. IN THIS MEETING AS WELL AS IN LATER CONVERSATION WITH COUNTRY OFFICER, AMBASSADOR POPOV MINIMIZED POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND VISIBILITY OF REQUESTED EXPANSION OF BULGARIAN COMMERCIAL FACILITIES IN U.S. COMPARED WITH OPENING OF CONSULAR FACILITIES.

7. AMBASSADOR POPOV SAID HE WILL BE RETURNING TO SOFIA ON

LEAVE AND CONSULTATION LATER IN NOVEMBER. MR. ARMITAGE
SUGGESTED THEY MEET AGAIN BEFORE POPOV'S DEPARTURE TO
REVIEW LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN MATTERS OF MUTUAL INTEREST.

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